



ex Regio Cimelio.

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Basire Sc.



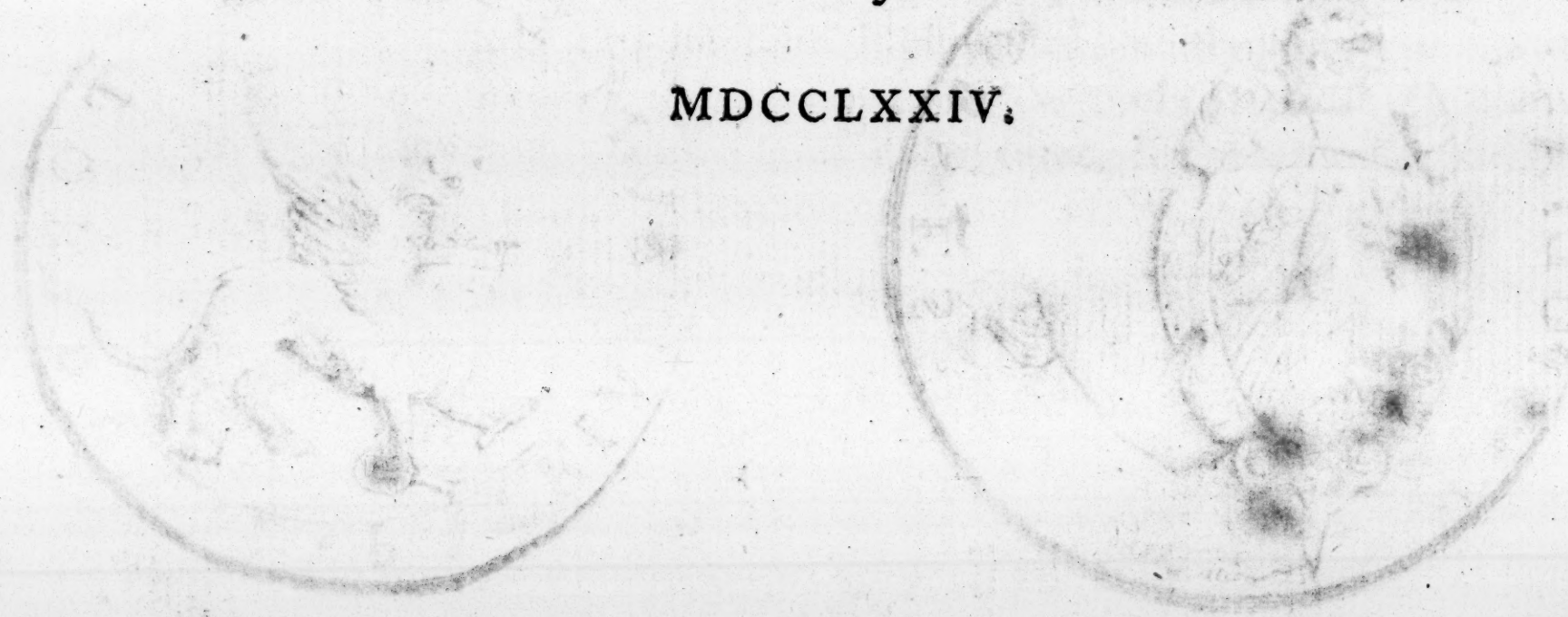
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LETTERS OF SIR RICHARD SHELLEY,

K

WHO WAS THE LAST ENGLISH GRAND-PRIOR  
OF THE ORDER OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM;  
SERVING TO ILLUSTRATE THE ANNEXED  
ENGRAVING OF TWO CURIOUS, INEDITED  
MEDALLIONS IN HIS MAJESTY'S COLLECTION.

MDCCLXXIV.







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L E T T E R S  
O F  
S I R R I C H A R D S H E L L E Y.

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TO SIR THOMAS CHALONER \*.

**M**Y N owne good Sir Thomas Chaloner; your good nature, and friendly affection towards me, have made me think good to leave here for you, at my departure, this remembrance; whereby you shall underſtande that I am gone towards Malta, (as I ſhould have been, long e're this time, if biſnes had not ſtayed me) there, to eſtabliſh th' office, and dignitie of the Turcopoliershippe† for our nation, which however littel it be eſteemed, or rather thought againſt, at home, by occaſion of greater affaires, (becauſe

\* The Queen's Miniſter at Madrid, when Sir Richard Shelley was in Philip II.'s Court.

† This was one of the fiſt great offices in the Order, equivalent to that of General of the Cavalry; and was one of thoſe dignities neceſſary to arrive at, previous to the being elected Grand Maſter. It was always annexed to the Grand Priory of England. But the Engliſh Knights being deprived of their benefices by Henry VIII. they, conſequently, loſt the rank and conſideration they were in at Malta; and at the death of Shelley's predeceſſor, the Grand Maſter thought proper to reſume the title, and keep it to himſelf, till the fate of the Roman Catholic intereſt in England was more poſitively determined.



no wiseman can but esteem it) yett is my ryte, (afore God and man) tho', to my greate cost and travaile, without hope of gaine or benefit; but rather with danger of displeasure, as the humor now reigneth: but my bounden dutye it is \* (as I said is every reasonable man's judgment) in no wise to suffer so goodly a preheminance of our nation to be lost, in my time, for lack of taking possession of the place; which hath been also cause that I would not take upon me to be called *Prior d'Inglaterra*, which, to every man's understanding, is a title of knowne honour; whereas *Turcopolier* is both so diffuse a name, as is not woorth the pains of pronouncing, and so straunge a dignitie, by reason of the long intermission, as hath no ready place of acceptation abroad: but as I have done in this, so will I always continue to *respect my Nation afore my Person, and the Publique afore my particular*: and, for the same reason, (and for none other respecte, *afore God*) I have already, here, and will procure, as I go, so much favor as may bee for th' establishing of our privileges in Malta; and to that ende only, and for religion's sake, *this vertuous and christen Prince* † hath both credited me with favor, and encreased my living; without meaning, or intent, to post, or employ me, any way, in his private service: so that to Malta I go, *true, and mere Inglish*, in following my conscience, to mainteyne my credit: *to be bestowea neverthelesse in the Queen's service*, wherein soever it shall be meet to employ a man of my ordre; which as it is in none other place of Christendom, so I trust it shall not in Ingland neither (by so gracious a Princeesse, and so honourable a Counsell) be understood, any way, to hinder the dutie of a true subject's allegiance to their naturall

\* —as he was *Lord Prior* of St. John of Jerusalem; which honour, conferred on him by *Queen Mary*, through the interest of *Cardinal Pole*, had entitled all his predecessors to a seat in the upper House of Parliament, next to the *Lord Abbot* of Westminster, and above all the Lay-Barons.

† Philip II. King of Spain.



Prince, and Countrey's service. And thus, myne own good Sir Thomas, I wyshe you well to fare, as any frende I have living.

Your assured loving frend,

Madrid the 15 of September, 1561.

Richard Shelley,  
Turcopolier.

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To the ryght honorable, his verie loving frend, Sir WILLIAM  
CICELL, Knight, Secretarie to the Quene's Majestie.

Right honorable,

**F**OR your hartie recommendations sent to me by Mr. Hall, this bearer, I likewise thanke you, and retorne you the same, with all due and true affection; which, (albeit without any benefit to you, because of my small power), yet nether fayled, nor faynted towards you, in any thinge that hath happened in England, fithens our acquayntance: and by my contynuanee of the same affection, I am now enduced (Mr. Secretarie) to remember, and require you, that, in this tyme of so great importance for th' establisshing of our estate, it may please you, with words and workes, openly to favour that moderation, and both christian, and politique equitie, in matters of religion especiallie, which, for my parte, I have always judged your good nature and wisdome gyven to allowe. Albeit, as your verie friend, I may not omyt to advertise you that the opinion abroad is cleane contrarie, and that the Quene's Majestie's charenes, and charitable indifferene in matters of religion, by you, and a verie few more, is thought not suffred to take effect. Then, Sir, for the passion of God, and for your own suertie, worcke to avoyd the envymous hatred of so villons a practice, and take in good parte your friend's true meanyng, that by this advertisement (albeit unpleasant



both for me to write, and you to read) doe declare how moche I tendre your estate, which, all that is said notwithstanding, may yet bee grounded upon a verie sure foundation, by your naturall dexteritie, and such meanes as you shall hereafter knowe, if this first advertisement be thankfullie accepted. I send to my Lady, and to you, here, a barrell of *Azucar rosado in conserva*, verie coole and laxatyve, to bee used every morning, freshe and fasting; and not to bee served, as wee use, after meales, instead of frute; in which advice I use pollicie with you, under pretence of phisicke, to make the litle barrell last longer; which indeed should have been bigger, had it not bene for troubling of Mr. Hall with too comberouse a carriage. My Lord Keeper, upon reherfall of the lettre, that I sent to you a great while agoe, concerning *Hatchman*, his farme and lease, did straighte (verie honorablie) dismisse the matter out of the Chauncerie; and in the Yeld-hall, *Hatchman* is so notorious for like practises, that I trust the matter shall shortly take good effect; speciallie if it may please you but to have an eare to it; or, if it shall so be needfull, ones to call *Hatchman* afore you, and examyn him of the mater, with mentioning to him some of these arguments that I alledged to you, in my forsaide letter. I doubt not but you shall fynd him both feynt, and confuse; but in the mean tyme, he booth enjoyeth the howse, without paying rent, or any thing: Mr. Smythe, Clercke of the Counsell, can inform you of the matter. Sythens the Embassee to the \* *Sophie* take no place, nor other motions and overtures, that I made to the † King, for his due mediation, to have had *Calays* restored to us for *Havre de Grace*, and to have used such equitie in releasyng our marchants, as I thought to great purpose for maynteynyng the amitie: Sythens non of all those things tooke effect, not for lacke of his Majesties good inclynation, (that is one of the best natured Princes in the world) but by other

\* Of Persia.

† Of Spain.



men's intervencion, I have ever bene desirous to get my house ; as it was never any parte of my meanyng to tarye so long, and much less to dwell here. Of late it was answered me, till this meetyng should be past, that I should talke no more of it ; till that fynallie heering Malta is besieged, I told his Majestie I must no longer tarie, and so ame going thither, with all speed I can ; not to dwell there, (if I shall fynd it foorth-comyng to dwell in,) nether, but for discharge of my duetie, ones at the lest, to present myself ; and after, if I shall not, by that tyme, be seasonable in my countrey, to betake myself *to my booke, and my beades*, in a *Venice*, or some other place of like quietnes ; which, above all other things, I most hartely wyshe ; and ame likewise assured, that your vertue and wisdome, (according to the greatnes of your estate,) will procure for our countrey : *Quoniam omnes, omnium, charitates patria superat.* Let us not, while wee talke of Heaven, so far above our reache, lose the portion of the earth that we are seased of ; and in likeliar possibilitie to encrease, peradventure, than ever any of our predeceffours : and with that conceyt and imagynation (right honourable Sir) I take my leave, and betake you, with my good Lady, and all you affaires, to the protection of Almightye God ; and recommend myself to booth your kynd and kynnesmanly remembrances : From

Madrid, the 22d June, 1765.

Your unfayned Frende,  
and lovyng Coosyne of  
St. Johns.

To



## To the Lord Treasurer BURLEIGH.

COPY of a lettre sent to your Honor, mo than seven yeres past, to th' entent it may please you, at your leysure, to consider that I have bene alwey one man; and, whatsoever my religion hath ben, that I have alwey had respect to my dutie of allegiance; and (notwithstanding my miserie, I have suffered in so many yeres absence abroad) that I have alwey tendered the Quene's faultie, and of my countrey, so much as any of them that engioye most nearly at home.——

RIGHT honorable, and my very good Lord; your answer cometh so thankfull; and, considering the let of your sickness, so quickly, as having to bee of your owne hand, that to me is more favour, it could never have comen sooner, nor yet more gratefull: wherefore, I thank your L. as you doe me, and (as tyme shall trie) with more affection of harte than ceremonie of wordes; as I have, furthermore, great cause to doe for your imparting my lettre, with so loving a pretense, to *her most excellent Majestie*, whose most gracious conceaving of my fidelitie, (and that concernynge myn allegiance to her Crowne, and royall person, I never did, nor will doe any thing amisse,) maketh me, from the bottome of my harte, most highlie to regioyce: and for such a subject of the Kings, of famous memorie, her father, and brother, was I (as your L. knoweth) taken and employed: which, for the rest, now content most gracioullie to beare with my conscience and religion; who, for my own parte, never hoped so to have prospered in that Courte, as in the tyme of her Majesties raigne, whose most excellent giftes (beside my deutie of allegiance) I always have had, and have at this presente, with a speciall affection, in greatest reverence and admyration; so help my God, whom I also call to witness, that I departed not her realme, with determynation to forsake her service, (which I will never do) no, nor then to abyde, and lyve abroad nether.



But while I taried in Antwerpe, longer than I had thoughte, ... shute of 3000 Crownes that *Fraunces the Myllanes* had failed withall of myn, there came neues that the *Crucifixe*, being honored (as the abridgement of all Christian faythe) in the *Quenes Chappell* and *Cloffet*, by her most excellent Majestie, and by your Lordshippes of her most honorable Counsell, was, nevertheless, in *Smythfield*, broken to peeces, and burned in bonnfiers; which made me call to remembrance that I had heard your L. saie to the old *L. Paget*, \* (that God forgyve) to whom pretending he that *Q. Marie*, of famous memorie, had restored the realme wholie Catholike, your L. answered, My Lord, you are therein so far deceived, that I fear rather an inondation of the contrarie parte; so universall a boylinge, and bublinge, I see, of stomackes, that cannot yet digest the cruditie of the tyme. That sayinge of your L., uppon the newes of burnynge the *Crucifixe*, I called to remembrance; and albeit I was encouraged to come home, with the remembrance of my servise done to her Majestie, in the tyme of her adversitie, (whereof the King of Spaigne is my witnes,) and with her most gracious acceptinge of me, at my comyng out of Flanders, and with the honour that you (my good L.) bothe then, and always had ever preserved me; yet fynallie I was feared with that furie of the people; and then sawe, (that your L. for sawe) the wynd and tyde so stronge that wey, that I determined, not to leave her Majesties service, but *secedere aliquo dum illæ fiescerent turbæ*, and to bere my service in store, till a more feasonable tyme, as I have done now these seventeen yeres: in all which time, God himself cannot accuse me, that I had ever evill thoughte agaynst my countrey; but rather knoweth that of all my adversities, the greatest hath bene, when I have seene it in trouble, or in any likelihood of forein invasion, which God forfend. *Parce, Domine, parce Populo tuo, et ne des Hæreditatem tuam in opprobrium,*

\* *Vide* a singular letter of this noble Lord in the Appendix.



*ut dominantur eis Nationes.* But, because the declaration of all my behaviour abroad were nowe too longe to entre into, (which must bee done, for all that, at some other tyme, seeing that my nephew, Richard Shelley, is dead by the waye, that went homeward with full instructions, to have enformed the Cownsell in this behalfe,) leaving the rest for this tyme, I now beseeche your L. t' understand howe I came to be called abroad, not Lord of St. John's, but *Prior of England*, as others bee named; every man of his countrey: Prior of *Fraunce*, Prior of *Almaigne*, Prior of *Ireland*, &c.

I contynued yeres abroad, by the name of *Turcopolier*, albeit my predeceffour died before any alteration was made, by Acte of Parliament, of that estate, which therfore was done to me as heire apparent, and invested in me, that was *Dominus natus*; but I thought it great follie, for a vayne title, without any rent, to offend at home, and to bynd myself to more chardges abroad, then otherwise should need to maynteigne; so that *Turcopolier* I contynued, till suche tyme as seeing the frendshippe betweene England, and Spaigne, every daie faynter than other, I told the King I was, there, an uncomelie Courtier; and that being out of my countrey, onely for religion's sake, it was meet for me to goe to Malta; which licens, with much adoe, yet fynallie, his Majestie did grant me, the yere 1561, as appeareth by the copie of his lettre yet foorth comynge; but, being on my way towards Malta, so far as Genua, there I found two letters, the one from the King his Majestie, th' oother from my L. Great Master; that being his desire (for he so wit-seemed to term it) was that I should retorne to his Courte in post, because he would send me Ambassadour into Persia; but my L. Great Master, his lettre comaunded and chardged me, uppon myn othe of obedience, with threatnyng, otherwise, to take from me my Crosse, that I should no longer differ to use, and take uppon me the title of my Priorie, which I could not omit to do, without preiudice of the Order; which was not looked for at my hands, whom he heard to be



be a man so constant in religion: and yet, the trewth is, if his Grace had known that I should have been revoked, and not have arryved at Malta, he would not have cared to let me alone with my title of *Turcopolier*; but because that office is, in the Covent, of so highe pre-emyence, (and above all Priors,) it could not be brooked that our nation should then engioye it; so that by expresse commaundement, where I was bound to obey in that besnes, (but not in any point pregiudiciall to my Soveraigne's authoritie,) I came to be called *Prior of England*, with whiche chardgeable title, after the *Sophie* his Ambassie took no place, (by reason that he had murdered Bayasitte the Turcke's sonne,) I went towards Malta ageyn, when it was besieged; where I was accepted with great countenance, and speciall favour of that worthie Prince, Monsieur *John de Valetta*; who being asked by me why he sent not, by some Knight, the newes of his victorie to the Quene's Majestie, as he did to oother Princes, confessed that in all the tyme of his government he never had comytted so great an errour, as the fore-flowing of that dewtie. But so long as his Grace lyved, I dwelt in Malta, and till such tyme as the Prior of Capua, who sought to usurpe my place, (being after, by *symonie*, chosen Great Master,) forced me, and almost fyred me out of the Covent, as \* Mr. *Cotton the Pencionar*, who was with me in my howse in Malta, can declare to your L. particularlie; of whom, I beseeche you, bee content to heare howe your poore cousyn maynteigned the countenance of our nation's dignitie, and pre-emyence, albeit he were too farre over matched; which strief your L. may one wey smyle at, and the other wey stomacke, to see one that by change of religion, is depryved of his lyving among them of his owne Order, and to bee abased of his honour: But out of England cometh no profit; and your L. knoweth our proverb, that saieth, *No penny, no pater-noster*: but in Malta, till this daie, and, I think,

\* Perhaps Sir Robert Cotton.



all my lief, I had bene resident if I wold have borne that abasinge of our nation, which neither as a Christian man, nor as an Englishman, nor as a *Shelley*, I might no wey endure.

Then, upon the breache of warre between \* this State, and the Turcke, to Venyse I came, sent for by a speciall lettre (that I have to shewe) of the Signoria †; and that to the benefit of all Christendom, with a speciall regard alwey to the interest of my cowntrey, whither all my doings be still directed. But that determynation, for our synnes, taking no effect nether, here I have remayned ever sithens ‡, without any entertaynment at any Prince's hands; for tho I could engioye the King of Spaigne his pension, with my wages *de la Bocca*; yet, albeit I have great need, I have no face to receave it, standing things as they doe betweene him, and the Quene's Majestie, my naturall Princess; so that willinglie I forbear forrein Princes enterteignment, and, muche against my will, want that recompense, which, afore God, and man, I well deserve at the Quene's hand, to bear me from beggarie the litle tyme I have to lyve, being now a man of three score and eight years, that have done service to her Majesties predecessors, yea and to herself, more than she knoweth of. But I am so carried away by this unwonted talk with you my good L., as tho' that all I have to saie were to bee uttered in one lettre, and that wee were not booth desirous of farder comunycation; for I am so farre from being afraid to conferre with your L. knowing the opynion that indifferent judges have of your nature and understanding, that, I assure you, I desire nothing more, as one that doe utterlie mislike their proceed-

\* The Venetian.

† Of Venice.

‡ And here seems to have been struck, his first Medal, on which he appears in armour, with the Cross on his breast, but bare-headed, with the following title,  
RICARDVS. SCELLEIVS. PRIOR. ANGLIAE. ANN. A. LXIIII.

On the reverse is a naked arm, holding out a shield, on which his own proper Coat of Arms is emblazoned, with the following motto,

SPOLIATI. CLYPEVS. OBSES.

very expressive of his situation and views.

ings



ings that, by religion, seeke to aveng pryvate quarrells, and to maynteigne such passions and partialities, as religion teacheth to quenche and mortefie : and so for this tyme will I breake off the talke, hereafter to be contynued, with your L.—, saving that I must needs add, tooching the *Earle of Oxford*, \* one word or two. I sent a gentleman of myn to Padova, with a lettre to gyve him the *in bora buona* of his welcome, and saulf arryval ; offering him, there, a howse fornyshed, that should have cost him nothing, and to have provided him the like, ageyn his comyng hither to Venyse, with all the service that I was able any wey to doe his L. He thanked me, by a lettre, for my courtesie, praying me nevertheles, verie earnestlie, here aftre to forbear the sending to him either lettre, or message, till he should know how I was thought of by the Quene's most excellent Majestie : which affection and wareness, albeit I liked verie well in so grete a subject, yet, on th' other side, it apawled me muche, that I, for all my wareness and fideletie, should, with him, bee in gelosie, as it were of a fugytive ; which, I understand, is growen onely by the occupation of my howse, that you, my L., gave me and got me, by the pallace of Westminster ; the usurpation whereof I wold not so muche esteeme, as your L. setting that, for my use, it was dissembled, and passed with silence, albeit my conveyances in the lawe, and disproprement were made in Quene Marie's tyme, and when I toke the Crosse, (that it has pleased God to punishe me with all ;) utterlie without suspicion of fraude or cover, as appeareth in the Rowles : but by the trespace, or (howsoever I shall term it,) the faulte of that howse ; (for a Courtier indeed verie comodious,) I to bee suspected as a rebell, to boote ! The remedie of that, my good Lord, I referre to your conscience. To lacke the rent of myn owne, beside so great losse as I have susteined of other preferments, is a punyshement of suche fawltes, as I am sure I nere comytted : and yet, as *Tully* said of *Cesar*, that many

\* Son in Law to Lord Burleigh.



iniuries were to be imputed to the violens of the victorie, and not to any bitternes of his nature, that was loving and kynde: So, my Lord, I take the occupation of that howse to bee, as it were, overflowen by the inondation of the tyde (that I tooched at the begynnyng,) and not to bee seased uppon by her Majestie, living among her oother princelie giftes, verie famus for her clemencie and compassionable nature. And I am abroad, with her Majesties passport, without lymitacion of retorne, albeit, it were not then meant by nather parte that I should tarie so long abroad. But of that, afore, I have declared the occasion; for frawde certenlie there was none; nor oother meanyng then *but* to recover the money I had leaste in merchant's hands in Antwerpe, when I first meant to have gone to Malta. Howsoever it bee, I hope your L. will remedie the errour, to th' end that I may, with suche confidence, assiste and forme my cousyn, your sonne, as hath taken no place with sonne-in-law; and that I, who in so long adversitie have alwey maynteigned the credyt of an *unspotted subject*, and of a *trew and starling Inglyshman*, begynne not, nowe so old a man, and at the later caste, to be shonned as contagious.—And thus having sufficiently declared, by the lengthe, and confidens of this lettre, that I take not for *piaculum* to have intelligens with your L., I pray God gyve you life and health; so wishing that which may bee most to her Majesties honour, and for your own surest establishment.

From Venyse, this                      of Maye, 1575.

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To the right honorable, and my very good Lord, the Baron of  
BURLEYE, L. highe Treasourer of England.

**R**IGHT honorable, my verie good Lord; the estate of your  
Calling, and great affaires, and ordinarie peyne of the Courte,  
hene alwey lawful excuses, how late soever your aunswers come to  
suche



suche as have occasion to wrighte unto you: but I, poore man, unoccupied, and in health, tho I bee old, what scuce shall I make acceptable for my so late reply to your honour's lettre? In good faythe, seeing her Majestie, upon your L.'s favorable relation, (that never wanted me,) tooke in so good parte myn endeavour onely, in *her Merchants' Case*, I differred my writing, from post to post, ever in hope to send to her Majestie the effect of that which she pretended, and the accomplishment of her desyre; which, in the merchants' cause onely, (much contrarie to myn expectacion,) hath fallen out all ootherwise, as your L. shall see at length, by the lettre I write to Sir Frauncis Walsingham; whereof for that, and all oother respects, I thoughte it necessarie to send you a copie; as I doe also of this Signorie's decree, and lettre to her Majestie, to th' end that your honour may have it at hand, and by you, to consider, at your leysure, the issue of this matter, and advertise me, (if it please you,) howe conformable it is to her Majesties intent. I meant so far, for the use her Majesties lettres to the Signori doe purport; ffor what \* *Benalio* hathe negotiate there, I doe not throughlie understand; albeit I have heard of lettres, and articles of his, sent hither to the *Ragazzons*: and thus much, (with the rest that your L. shall understand by Sir Frauncis his letter,) for the Venetians matters, pryvate, and publicke, shall suffice.

And therefore now, touching myself, I saye, that I acknowledge myselfe most bounde to your L. for the testimonie it hath pleased you to gyve to her Majestie of my perpetuall fidelitie, which hath bene alwey accompagned with a particoler, and partiall affection to her Royall person; and therefore, if God shall inspire her to shewe herself my gracious Soveraigne, she shall doe a famouse fact, and most aunfwerable to the opynion that is spred of her kynde, and gratefull nature: but for that I am her loyall subject, feing I ame

\* His name is mentioned in Strype's Annals, vol. iii. pa. 40.

a Catholike,



a Catholike, she oweth me nothing; for it is a duetie, whereunto I am bound by the religion that I profes; and therefore I humbly beseech her wisdom and clemencie, for so much as she estimeth the approved constancie of my faythfulnes toward her Majestie, who (notwithstanding that the schisme, and not her owne conscience, hath dryven me to *nullosq. Lares, inopemq. senectam,*) am ready, nevertheless, to spend the best blood in my bodie for her faultie. For this my patience, (as of a second *Job,*) ones agayn, I beseeche her wisdom in no wise to procure, or wishe me to change that religion which teacheth me the reverence that I owe, and the obedience that I am bound to observe, to her Royall estate. Whereas in place of this conscience, and of this patience, wheresoever our Discipline is neglected, there followe streight contrarie effects, of licentious libertie, and disobedience, directly against the absolute autoritie, and inviolable Majestie of the Prince's estate: and all is applied to a popularitie that, being let loose, *Qua data porta ruit, et terras turbine perflat*: which I talke not as a clercke, nor dispute not as a scholer, but simplie report that I have seene, and wishe to be weyghed, for the faultie of my Prince, and of my Countrey; wherein (my Lord) as a gentleman, and one of your kynde, I have also my parte, and portion of interest; who, not to bee suspected as a passionate, or as any oother Prince's man, your honour shall understand that these many yeres, and sins I sawe howe things went, and were likely to pass betwene my Maistres, and the King of Spaigne, I never have taken ether any wages, or pension thens; which, under a most honest collar, of my being abroad for religion onely, (but with an other designe, and second intent, as I conceive it,) hath bene, and is alwey, forth comyng at myn own will: but I thank God more for the patience that he hath gyven me; (wherewithall I trust have gaigned the grace of the Quene my Sovereigne,) than I doe estyme any greatnes that I could have received of any  
forreyn



forreyn Prince that presentlie taketh pleasure, or finallie hopeth profet, by the travell, and troble of my naturall Prince, and Countrey: and I lyve with this faythe, that to your honor, who ever hath loved me, (albeit in religion wee dissent,) the Quene finallie will saie, that to me her Majestie, (as God did to his servant *Job*,) *reddet omnia duplicia*; seeing she hath sene I ame a man of such faythe, and honour, as voluntarilie have chosen to endure twenty-three years exile, and povertie, rather then to prevaricate, any wey, in the cause of God, or of my Prince, and rather than to dallye ether with my conscience, or with myn allegiance; which conscience costeth me full deere, for one respect, in England, and, for an oother, in Italy: but for that I lacke from home, I trust, as I sayd, that the Quene some wey will supplie; and as for that I could attayne abroad, I will not buye it so deere—I will rather starve then remedye my necessitie with any designe, upon me, to bee made for the damage of my Prince, or countrey: and for such a subject King *Henry the Eighte* knew my father, whom, in his youthe, he loved very well. And albeit, in my *L. Cromwell's* tyme, he passed termes, and with great losse, (which, after, was recompensed liberallie,) yet fynallie the King made mucche of him agayne, and vouchsafed to tell me at Detford, (where S. Edward Rogers carved, and I \* shoed, to his Majestie,) of the great chere he had at † *Michelgrove*, with great comendation of my father's uprightnes, whom his Majestie, at the begynnyng of his raygne, forced therefore, almost at ones, to become Sergeant and Judge, much against his will, that was his father's eldest sonne, and put to the Innes of Courte, but to learne to understand his owne evidence. And such subjects, I thinke, her Majestie knoweth to be all the *Shelleys* in

\* Shewed, or waited at table.

† The family feat of the *Shelleys*, in *Sussex*.



her realme, booth men and women, her affectionat and assured subiects ; and such as will rather die then do, or consent to eny thing agaynst their duetie of alleageance † ; and therefore are not, (as I conceave of your provydence, and pollicie at home) to be persecuted for their conscience sake. Howsoever it be, I, for my owne parte, as I have these XXIII yeres, so will not I fayle, (with grace of God, for this litle tyme that I have to lyve) to perform your L.'s trewly grounded opynion, that, beside all oother dewtie, I take it for a pointe of honour no wey to be spotted with disloyaltie ; who I trust, on the oother side, will, for your parte, assiste that I bee not brought to *turpis egestas*, seing specially, that *Jacomo de Bardi*, the merchant, is fayled with my stocke that I have lyved uppon since I forboare the King of Spaigne his pention, and wages. I said *turpis egestas*, not because I ame ashamed of povertie, after the sorte that I am comen to it, but because, you knowe, Need is the greatest tentacion that can bee, to make men doe things that bee shamefull and dishonest ; because man's frayltie cannot be assured of itself, but that he may be broughte in *furorem læsa sæpius patientia* ; or else Christ wold not have put in our Pater-noster *Et ne nos inducas in tentationem*. But nowe it is highe tyme to make an end, as I will doe, with that parte of your L. letter, which being, for the matter, more agreeable to my sense, was, for that circumstance, so much the more gratefull, because you were transported into it, *ex abundantia cordis*, intending nothing less than to toche any such matter, but to beare, without any grudge, (not only without hatred,) ech of us with oothers conscience, that bee all Christiens, and do *all for the glorie of God* ; that is a pointe of suche importance for the Quenes faultie, and of the realme, that ought to be spoken, wrytten, yea pryntted, and graved every where ; which every man wissheth that hath any jott of good-nature in his bodie, and no man misliketh but suche as, under pretence of religion, bee



indeed factious, and take that way to atehieve their ambition:  
 - And so beseeching your L. to procure further that I may  
 have a playne and sufficient passport, for me and my folkes,  
 to goe and come freely, to th' end I may conferre with her Ma-  
 jestie; and with your honours, *de summa rerum*, &c. (as I have  
 wrytten to Mr. Secretary;) I pray God maynteigne your Honour in  
 health, and gyve me so much strength that, ones ever that I die, I  
 may embrace you in your owne howse, and kysse my good Lady  
 your wyfe's hands; to whom, in the meane tyme, it may please  
 you to have me most humblie remembered: ffrom Venyse the 24. of  
 August 1582 your most bownden, and humble Coofzen of S.  
 John's.

Copie of my Lettre to Sir FRAUNCES WALSINGHAM.

**R**YGH T Honorable; I acknowledge myself much bound to  
 your Honour for the good reporte it hath pleased you to make  
 of my faythfulness to the Quene's most excellent Majestie, which  
 office your Honour's self, (of your modestie,) dothe not so en-  
 lardge, in your owne lettre to me, as the Lord Treasurer, my  
 great good Lord, hath with all efficacie declared it to me: in  
 consideration whereof, it may seem, I deserve some blame that  
 have bene so slow in acknowledging the benefit that you did so  
 livelie, and in aunswering your Honours lettre, to me of so great  
 comfort; but the cause thereof hath not bene either my not con-  
 ceaving your favour shewed to me, so ample and effectual as it is,  
 myn unreadines to acknowledge the same; for God forbid I  
 should bee guiltie of such ingratitude. The trewth is, (Sir Fraun-  
 ces) seeing her Majestie accepted so graciously my good wyll and  
 endeavour onely to have her will fulfilled in *her merchants sute*, I  
 differd my wryting from post to poste, with hope to see and send to  
 her Highnes the accomplishment of her desyre. Neverthelesse  
 boothe the lingering hath been so long as I could never have yma-

D

gyned,



gyned, and th' effect fallen out all otherwise then I looked for. But fins the aunswer to her Majesties lettre, and the decree (that I send herewith) were passed by the Counsell that they call of *Pregadi*, (for here, I tell you, things passe throughe many halls and hands;) I have so debated the matter with the Generall *Foscarini* and the Procurer *Michaeli*, that booth profess to be her Majesties particler servants, (and my good Lord's) that I dare saie, upon the confidence I have in their honours, so soone as the last encreased customes shall bee there taken away, (which they gether to bee her Majesties intent,) that then there shall none other bee taken; so well for recompens of all that the merchants have already paid, as for that they had bargayned for, afore the publishing of the first decree in the Isle of Zante; and that they shall receive such benefit, by her Highnes' recomendation, as shall well declare the authoritie that her Majestie hath in this famous Senate and Comonwealthe.

For setting nowe asyde the merchants sute, which is a small matter, in respect of the old duytye that is nowe meant to bee renewed, I dare avowe to your Honour that this State is so desirous of it, as they shall therby receive greater comoditye in their trafficke; and as it standeth them more uppon, for their owne faultie, that there should bee foorthcomyng a realme of *England*, (and, as we saie, *a Rowland for an Olyver*) to encounter with those mightie nations of France and Spaigne; as King Henry VIII, *the Salomon of his tyme*, forfawe, (when all oother Princes had, as it were, conspired in Cambrey against this Senate) that it was meet, for the indempnitie of his Crowne, to maynteigne a State of *Venyse*: And so he did not only advertise them of that League, but also helpe them booth with counsell and with money. And tooching these Venetian matters, booth of our merchants and of the State, this, for this tyme, I thinke sufficient.

But concerning myself, and the desire I have to bee at home, so I might there lyve catholickelie, trewth it is, (albeit I meant to bee myself the first that should wryght to you thereof) that I wishe  
nothing



nothing more: But fithens the late tragedies, caused (as the warre in Ireland was) by a generation that I never liked, I thought not the tyme yet feasonable to make that motion; in which opynion I was confirmed so muche the more, because, in all this while, I had not from your Honour any resolution thereof, as your meanyng was, at the wryting of your lettre, to have sent me by the next post: and so much the more, because my L. Treasorer wrote to me the Quenes pleasure was that he should prove if I might bee recovered to conforme myself to the religion there establihed, which clause was to me so strange, and so appawled me, that streight I thoughte my cake was dough. I hoped her Majestie had knowne me better than to thinke that to bee possible, or a wey meet for me to take for her service, which is the thing, (God I call to witnes,) that I pretend, for ootherwise, being now a man of threescore yeres and eight, I little care in what countrey I bee carried to my grave.

Then, utterlie to reject this sorrowfull propos, and to relyve this hevye thoughte with a more pleasant imagynation, I saie that I ame so desirous, ones ever I die, to see the Quene's, my Soveraigne's, most excellent Majestie, whom naturallie I have alwey bene gyven to love and tendre, and to discharge the duetie of so faythfull a subject, as her Highnes hath tried me to bee, with three and twentie yeres adversitie; I meane in discovering to her, for her owne faulftie and of her realme, suche matter as to lettres is not to bee comytted. For these causes I do longhe to kys her gracious hand, that if it may please her to graunte me a passport, with my folke, to come and to goe freelie, without any suche examynation as (uppon occasion mynistred of just gelosie,) hath of late bene taken of oothers, and without any manner of communication to bee had with me, saving of matter of estate, for the Quenes faulftie and of my Countrey: Uppon hope of this privilege to be graunted me, for the tried honestie of myn behaviour in so meny yeres absens, I will furthwith put myself in viage (thoughe it bee in a lytter) *to come and*



*creepe to her princely presens.* And beseeching your Honor that of this I may have speedie resolution, for this tyme, I make an end, and leave you to the care of the Almighty, whom it may please prosper your vertuous doyngs.

From Venyse the 24th of August 1582.

Postscript. The above named Procurator *Michaeli*, who is here a Senator of the highest degree, and was Ambassader in Fraunce, in the tyme of the *Massacre* in Parys, hath him most hartely recommended to your Honour, as one that hath in good remembrance the famyliar friendship and conversation that was betweene ye in those trobelous tymes, and is here nowe in *rebus secundis*, and come to the quietnes of *meminisse iuvat*. I assure you he speaketh verie honorable of your good nature and dexteritie in affayres.

### To the QUEENE.

Most excellent Majestie, and my most dread Sovereigne.

**A**LBEIT the ordinarie and extraordinarie occasions, of delaye in these Republicques, for the often change and different opynions of diverse Magistrates, bene almost incredible to such as bene used to the resolution of Monarchies; and that, fithens the presenting of your Majesties lettre, there hath been discovered in this bodie politicke, (as hapneth often naturall bodies,) certeyn humors that had need of coonnyng physitions and of a present purgation; Yet, all this notwithstanding, I must nedes confesse that the not executing their offer made to your Majestie, for revoking the *newe impost*, maketh me confuse and at my wyttes end; as at my retorne I will declare to your Majestie, with the qualitie of the humor that I speake of, as thinges not to bee comytted to lettres, subiect to suche chaunces as I myself fynd by experience.

In the meane tyme assuring your Majestie that I fayle not to plie them with contynuall, yea, and importune sollicitacon, I kysse your gracious hand, with all dewtifull reverence, for the passport it  
hathe



hathe pleased you to graunte me, which I meane to use, so farre as I shall geat the dispatche of that your Majestie pretendeth here to have ended: For I ame full fraughte with matter of long lading to utter to your Majestie, for the faultie of your personne and of your realme. In the meane tyme it reioyceth every veyne of my harte to perceave, by your Majesties most gratiouse lettre, that which I have often protested and wrytten in your behalf, I meane of your natural clemencie, abhorring bloudshed, and those terrible executions whiche your Majestie avowethe to be dryven to, by the deepe malice (alas) of your enemyes, seeking that way rather to make you odious, and to put you in harsarde of your estate, than any ordinarie and comelie wey of accesse for comunycation: Whereof it were verie necessarie to make some wrytinge to bee published, whiche would not only bee acceptable, but is looked for, almost, by all Princes, and by a great number of indifferent personnes, that like nothinge to have your Majestie provoked after suche sorte. And so, my most gracious Soveraigne, as one that acknowledge myself most bounde to your Highness clemencie, for the favour, that Mr. Secretarie wryteth me, it hath pleased ye of late to shew to my Nepheues, (your loving subiects, notwithstanding their conscience in religion, I beseeche Almighty God so to guyde your Majesties government, in these troublous tymes, as maye fall out most to his glorie and to the faultie of your Royall personne.

From Venyse, the 27th of Maye, 1583.

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To the Ryght Honorable, and his deerle beloved Frend, Sir  
FRANCIS WALSINGHAM, Knight, Chief Secretarie  
to the Quene's most excellent Majestie.

Right honorable :

**W**ITH all humble remembrance of my dewtie, for my staye of yet not comyng home, albeit there bee apparenthe cause ynowe, yet to my L. Treasourer I have wrytten thereof, at good length,



length, to whose lettre I remyte your Honour, in that behalf; as I doe his L. to this I nowe wright to your Honnour of these affayres, and of the delyverye of her Majesties lettre, which hathe put this Senate, (that hathe ootherwise comberous matters in hand,) in some more travell then they had before. But I hope the end will be good; and the Prince hathe promised me most lovingly, (as he hath bene alwey affected to the matter,) that he will urge the expedition, which by his authoritie (ootherwise not peremptory,) he may doe. And there is now comen into the colledge, (as a young man to hear and learne (without voice) for fix monthes, with title of *Savio de gli Ordini* (to be nested in affairs \*) ) *Octaviano Cornaro* who hathe bene with me dyverse tymes † (and made verie honorable reporte of the favour that he received at her Majesties hands, and of your Honnour, with whom I spake this mornynge, congratulating to him this entree into the *Colledge* ‡; where I doubte not but that he will declare so muche as he had reported to me, many tymes, of her Majesties affection to *Italiens*, and 'specially to them of this State, where a great matter, of *her Merchants*, and of great consequence for her Royall estimation, and amytye with this Comonwealthe, is nowe in hand, by him, uppon this occasion, to be put in remembrance, for the good and quyete Expedytion not only of his gentlemanly gratitude, but nowe *ex officio*, and by his place of speciall dewtie.

In the meane tyme I have gyven to every one of the Chief Counsellors, in one shete of paper, first, a copie of their owne Decree; secondly, a copie of her Majesties lettre; and thirdly, a remembrance, after such sorte as followinge: “ *In consideratione*

\* Innested, or initiated.

† It appears that, at this time, the Venetian nobility was allowed a very free intercourse with the foreign Ministers residing among them: but since the conspiracy of Bedamar in 1619, that intercourse has been prohibited with so much rigour, that, at present, a Venetian nobleman dreads even to exchange a word either with them, or any of their dependants.

‡ Or Senate.



“ del qual decreto dell' Exm<sup>o</sup> Senato, et de questa lettera de sua Ma-  
 “ jestà, si pretende Prima, che di longa via si sospenda, per l'ave-  
 “ nire almeno, et fin'a la conclusione di questo negotio, (che hormai è  
 “ tempo che si risolva,) quello pagamento della nuova imposta ch'in  
 “ Ingr<sup>a</sup> è stato sospeso alli vassalli di V. ser<sup>a</sup> fin' dal principio,  
 “ che sono hormai tre anni; Secondo, che le piacerà fare rimborsare gli  
 “ nostri Mercanti di quella somma di danaro che constarà essere da loro  
 “ stata pagata, per la nuova imposta, prima che ne havessero notitia  
 “ alcuna, come consta che in Ingr<sup>a</sup> è stata perdonata detta imposta  
 “ alle Navi Venetiane che arrivorno in Londra senza haverne notitia  
 “ quando si partirono di qui.” And thus is so much, for this tyme,  
 I have to wryghte to your Honour, whom it may please Almightye  
 God longhe to preserve, to the glorie of his name, for her Majesties  
 service and benefite of the realme.

From Venyse the 7 of Julye 1584.

At your Honour's comaundment

Your humble, and lovyng frende of St. Johns.

### To the Same.

**B**ESYDE myn humble comendations, I have at this tyme  
 nothing to wryghte to your Honor, because to you apper-  
 teyneth the reading of all that I wryght and send to her Majestie,  
 saving to beseeche you that you will assiste bothe these my wryt-  
 ings and all myn other doings with your favour, so far forthe as  
 you have me zelous of her Majestie faulstie and servise; and for  
 the rest to bear with myn imperfections, remembring the proverb  
 that seyth *chi perde il suo perde il senno*; and certeynly my Nephew  
 Shelley \* his adversitie troubleth me fore; for whom I beseeche you

\* The presenter of a petition to Parliament in behalf of the Roman Catholicks.  
 Vide Strype, vol. iii. pa. 298.



to recommend the sue that I make to her Majestie, seeing *I conceive*  
*his fault is not of malice.* And so, making an end for this tyme, I  
take my leave, beseeching the Almighty to prosper your paynfull  
service, to the encrease of your Honor, and benefit of her Majestie  
and the realme:

From Venysse the 18th of Novembre 1584.

Your Honor's command,

R. Shelley of St. John's.

To the Same.

**S**EING I had of necessity to send to your Honnor the new  
Decree, I came in consideration to thinke that it was meet to  
send it to you, also annexed with oother wryting, as I doe;  
whereby, and by the lettre I wright to her Majestie, your Honnor  
shall perceave so much, booth of that matter and of myself, that  
there remayneth els for me nothing to saie, but humblie to re-  
comend myself, and all my meanyng, to your good grace and fa-  
vorable interpretacion, who may bee assured that I doe meane so  
zealously to her Majestie, and to my Countrey, as, (if I shall be  
liable to performe,) that I wish I shall *riuscire* as good a servant  
as ever she had any, and as good a subject as ever was borne in  
England, so healp me God; who preserve your Honnor to the ac-  
complishment of all your virtuous desyres.

Your Honor's, assuredlye to commande,

R. Shelley, of St. Johns.

From Venysse the 17th of Decembre 1584 \*.

\* Most probably, it was about this time that, considering himself as the Queen's Minister, in a business of importance, he thought proper to give to his Medal a new Reverse, representing a Griffin, (allusive to his Family Crest,) with the following motto, PATRIAE SVM EXCVBITOR OPUM, in which he seems, not impro-  
piously, to imply the mercantile interest to be the riches of his country.